

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS

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SUBJECT: STATUS OF STATE SECRETARIES IN GOF

1. COMMUNIQUE ISSUED FOLLOWING COUNCIL OF MINISTERS
MEETING SEPTEMBER 8 REPORTED INTER ALIA ADOPTION OF
TWO DECREES TRANSFERRING RESPONSIBILITY FOR OVERSEAS
TERRITORIES AND DEPARTMENTS AND FOR TRANSPORTATION TO,
RESPECTIVELY, THE MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR AND THE
MINISTER OF EQUIPMENT. COMMUNIQUE NOTES THAT THIS
TRANSFER RESULTS FROM RECENT GOVERNMENTAL REORGANIZATION
WHEREIN STATE SECRETARIES, WHO PREVIOUSLY HAD
RESPONSIBILITY IN THESE MATTERS, WERE PLACED UNDER THE
TWO MINISTERS IN QUESTION. STATE SECRETARIES FALL
INTO TWO CATEGORIES: THOSE WHICH ARE SO-CALLED INDE-
PENDENT AND THOSE WHICH ARE ATTACHED TO ANOTHER
MINISTRY. OVERSEAS TERRITORIES AND DEPARTMENTS, AND
TRANSPORTATION, BOTH FELL INTO THE CATEGORY OF INDE-
PENDENT STATE SECRETARIES. THE FACT THAT THEY ARE
NOW ATTACHED TO MINISTRIES IS EVIDENCE OF GISCARD'S
WISH TO STREAMLINE THE CABINET (IN THE RECENT CABINET
CHANGE THE NUMBER OF MINISTERS AND STATE SECRETARIES
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DROPPED FROM 43 TO 36), AND TO CREATE SOMEWHAT MORE OF

AN ESPRIT DE CORPS IN THE CABINET.

3. OLIVIER STIRN, ALTHOUGH OSTENSIBLY BELONGING TO THE UDR PARTY, IS ONE OF THE MORE APOLITICAL MEMBERS OF THE CABINET. HIS TASKS DO NOT LEAVE HIM MUCH ROOM FOR MANEUVERING AND POLITICKING IN METROPOLITAN FRANCE, ALTHOUGH THE JOB ITSELF TAKES ON INCREASED SIGNIFICANCE WHEN CONDITIONS SUCH AS THE MAYOTTE INDEPENDENCE PROBLEM AND THE GUADELOUPE VOLCANO BEGAN TO CAPTURE HEADLINES. STIRN HIMSELF DOES NOT GIVE EVIDENCE OF ANY PARTICULAR BRILLIANCE OR AMBITION. HIS COMMENT, FOR EXAMPLE, ON THE ADMITTEDLY EFFICIENT EVACUATION OF THOSE PEOPLE LIVING IN THE DANGER AREA AROUND LA SOUFREIERE WAS THAT THE EVACUATION EVINCED "THE EFFICIENCY AND VALUE OF THE LIBERAL ADVANCED SOCIETY."

3. SEVERAL REASONS COULD EXPLAIN TRANSFER OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR TRANSPORTATION TO FOURCADE. MINISTER OF EQUIPMENT HAD RESPONSIBILITY FOR TRANSPORTATION (AND SEVERAL TRANSPORTATION SERVICES STILL REMAIN HOUSED IN EQUIPMENT MINISTRY UNTIL TRANSPORTATION WAS MADE A SEPARATE MINISTRY A FEW YEARS AGO AND WAS THEN DOWNGRADED TO STATE SECRETARIAT STATUS. TRANSFER OF RESPONSIBILITY NOW OSTENSIBLY UPGRADES IMPORTANCE OF TRANSPORTAHION SECTOR AND PLACES IT IN HANDS OF FULL MINISTER(FOURCADE) WHO CERTAINLY HAS MORE ABILITY AND CLOUT THAN DOES (OR DID) CAVAILLE. CAVAILLE HAS NEVER BEEN IMPRESSIVE BY HIS INTELLIGENCE OR ADREITNESS. WE SUSPECT THAT ONLY REASON CAVAILLE WAS KEPT ON EVEN AS DOWNGRADED STATE SECRETARY IS BECAUSE HE IS FROM TOULOUSE AND GOES HOPES LOCAL FEEDBACK FROM CIVAIR PROJECTS FOR WHICH CAVAILLE CAN TAKE CREDIT WILL HELP ENSURE LOCAL SUPPORT IN 1977 MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS WHEN SOCIALISTS WILL ATTEMPT WREST BACK CONTROL OF TOULOUSE MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT. LASTLY, AND PERHAPS MOST SIGNIFICANTLY, TRANSFER OF TRANSPORTATION TO FOURCADE GIVES HIS MINISTRY THE "IMPORTANT NEW RESPONSIBILITES" WHICH GISCARD ANNOUNCED FOURCADE WOULD BE ASSIGNED IN THE NEW GOVERNMENT. THE NEW RESPONSIBILITIES, HOWEVER, RING A LITTLE HOLLOW

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WHEN ONE TAKES INTO CONSIDERATION THAT FOURCADE IS PROBABLY THE ONLY SERIOUS CASUALTY OF THE RECENT CABINET SHAKEUP. AS A MAN WHO SUPPORTED FAITHFULLY, AND EVEN AGRESSIVELY, GISCARD'S PROGRAMS AND POLICIES, FOURCADE MUST FIND BITTER RECOMPENSE IN BEING DROPPED NO LESS THAN SIX SLOTS ON THE PROTOCOL RANK. THOUGH HE CONTINUES TO ANIMATE AND DIRECT THE INDEPENDENT REPUBLICANS' POLITICAL CLUB, PERSPECTIVES ET REALITES,M

AND THOUGH HE HELD HIS OWN VERY WELL AGAINST PS LEADER FRANCOIS METTERRAND IN THEIR WIDELY PUBLICIZED TV DEBATE LAST SPRING, FOURCADE DOES NOT SEEM TO HAVE THE POLITICAL CLOUD THAT GISCARD WAS LOOKING FOR IN THE IMPORTANT POST OF MINISTER OF FINANCE. IN ADDITION, THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR INFLATION AND MONETARY INSTABILITY IS LAID, ALBEIT RATHER UNJUSTLY, AT FOURCADES'S DOOR, NECESSITATING HIS EXCLUSION FORM THE POST OF FINANCE MINISTER IN A GOVERNMENT WHOSE DECLARED REASON FOR BEING IS TO FIGHT THOSE VERY ILLS.

4. CHANGE IN RESPONSIBILITY FOR TRANSPORTATION IS OF SPECIAL IMPORTANCE TO US RE CIVAIR MATTER, NOT ONLY RE CONCORDE BUT ALSO MECURE 200 AND RELATED DEVELOPMENTS ON WHICH FOURCADE IS KNOWN TO HAVE STRONG VIEW. IT ALSO REMOVES AMBIGUITY IN STATUS OF CAVAILLE, WHO IN THE PAST HAD FULL IMINSTERIAL POWERS BUT THE TITLE AND STATUS OF JUNIOR MINISTER. HIS JUNIOR STATUS IS NOW CONFIRMED, THOUGH IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN HOW EXTENSIVE WILL BE THE POWERS THAT FOURCADE MAY DELEGATE TO HIM. FOURCADE IS CLEARLY THE OPPOSITE NUMBER OF US SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION, ANYWAY, WHILE CAVAILLE WOULD RANK WITH DOT DEPUTY SECRETARY. THIS DISTINCTION IS IMPORTANT TO KEEP IN MIND IN THE EVENT OF ANY FUTURE CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN DOT AND GOF AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL ON TRANSPORTATION QUESTION.

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